

Get the latest information

You can read more about the executive-proposed updates on-line at www.metrokc.gov/ddes/cao. There you'll find the complete text of the latest Draft of the Critical Areas Ordinance, along with summaries and details on the specific elements of each proposal. You can e-mail the executive staff at [CAO- StormwaterUpdate@metrokc.gov](mailto:CAO-StormwaterUpdate@metrokc.gov).

You can receive free e-mail updates on the CAO, and the new release date for the second draft CAO, by sending an e-mail message to listman@metrokc.gov with the words "Subscribe KC Critical Areas Ordinance Update" in the subject line of the message.



You can also call or write executive-branch staff at:

Critical Areas / Stormwater Ordinances
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98104
206-205-3888 or toll-free 1-866-434-0318

CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE

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CRITICAL AREAS ORDINANCE

April 2003

Dear residents of rural King County,



I want to make sure you know that King County has a public process for the update of our Critical Areas Ordinance, and that you have the information

you need to get involved in affecting the final outcome.

To comply with State law, King County must update our land-use regulations protecting environmentally sensitive areas and public health and safety. We are required in this update to include the best available science as a basis for the protections. As a matter of policy, we also want to be sure to strike the proper balance between environmental protection, the needs of agriculture, and the rights of property owners.

The Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) has regulations that will have a direct impact on how you will be able to use your property. I want to ensure that you have a voice in shaping the final Ordinance.

I hope this information helps you understand the issues at hand and how you can get involved to affect the outcomes of this process.



Councilmember Jane Hague, Chair
Growth Management & Unincorporated Areas Committee
Metropolitan King County Council

What are these proposed regulations?

Right now, three executive-branch agencies — the Departments of Development and Environmental Services (DDes), Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP), and Transportation (KCDOT) — are working on proposed updates to a range of county land-use regulations. These discussions affect enactment of the Sensitive Areas Code, substantive changes relating to the clearing and grading of land and, perhaps most importantly, buffer requirements along wetlands, streams and rivers.



The public had an opportunity to comment on the first draft of the proposed updates—which was introduced last December—during a series of public meetings in January.

At those meetings, citizens raised a number of important issues, in particular that the imposition of larger setbacks along wetlands and waterways would ultimately place even more rural lands off limits, and adversely affect landowners’ ability to develop. The public comment on this first executive draft closed on February 28, 2003. It became clear from the public testimony and from correspondence received by councilmembers, that the proposed updates are a lightning rod of anger for rural landowners.

Status as of early April, 2003

Executive staff members are evaluating the information they received during the first comment period, and are incorporating it into a **second** public review draft. Although this second draft was scheduled for release in May, **it now may not be available until later this summer.**



When the King County Executive is satisfied with the final draft, he will transmit his executive proposal to the County Council for adoption. The timetable for this transmittal is up to the executive.

For updates, check the County Council homepage at: **www.metrokc.gov/council** and follow the link to our own Critical Areas Ordinance page.

County Council review process

When we on the Metropolitan King County Council receive the **executive-proposed** updates in the form of proposed ordinances, we will assign the legislation to a committee for review. This will most likely be the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee, which I chair. I regard this as one of the most important and substantive issues we will consider this year, so I intend to conduct a number of public hearings at which you may speak, before we pass any recommendation to the full council.

After receipt from the executive, it may take as long as **12 to 15 months to review by council** committee before a recommendation can be sent to the full County Council. The full Council is likely to hold many more public hearings on the committee recommendation before taking action on the final Ordinance.



I encourage you as a concerned citizen to take full advantage of these opportunities to share your comments before the committee and the council.

